

3 a plurality of sidebars,
4 each of said sidebars having an inner side and an outer side,
5 said inner sides defining an aperture,
6 said outer sides defining a chip-support zone,
7 said zone being smaller in each dimension than a corresponding dimension of the chip,
8 each sidebar having an upper chip-supporting surface for engaging the bottom surface of the
9 chip.

1 2. (Amended) The lead frame of claim 1, wherein said chip-supporting surface engages
2 the bottom of the chip at a location remote from higher stress regions associated with corners of the
3 chip.

1 6. (Amended) The lead frame of claim 1, further comprising:
2 a plurality of support members having proximal and distal ends, each support member being
3 connected to at least one sidebar by said proximal end thereof.

1 8. (Amended) The lead frame of claim 7, further comprising:
2 a plurality of support members having proximal and distal ends, each support member being
3 connected to at least one sidebar by said proximal end thereof, defining a connection.

1 9. (Amended) The lead frame of claim 8, wherein each of said connections between
2 each support member and the at least one sidebar is in the vicinity of a respective corner.

1 13. (Amended) A lead frame for an integrated circuit chip having a frame-engaging
2 bottom surface, comprising:

3 a plurality of sidebars, each of said sidebars having an inner side and an outer side, said
4 sidebars defining an aperture, said frame being sized to be accommodated entirely within
5 corresponding outer edges of the circuit chip, each side bar having an upper chip-supporting surface
6 for engaging the bottom surface of the chip.